

Gregorius, monke, fls. 17th cent.

A

LETTER, RELATING THE

Martyrdome of KETABAN, Mother
of TEIMVRAS: Prince of the
GEORGIANS, & withall

A notable Imposition of the Iesuites
vpon that occasion:

SENT

From GREGORIVS Monke and
Priest, Agent for the Patriarke of
ANTIOCH vnto the most
holy and learned Abbot
SOPHRONIVS.

*Written first in Greeke, and now
done in English.*

OXFORD,

Printed by John Lichfield, An.D. 1633.

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TO THE READER.

GEntle Reader; Because in this Letter, mention is made of the Georgians, who are a kinde of Christians that liue in another part of the world, and so perhaps vnknowne vnto thee; Therefore I thought good to direct thee to some Authors from whom thou maist receiue information concerning their State and condition, as followeth.

Those travells, which with some toyle and danger were performed and afterward recorded with sincerity and diligence by M^r George Sandys, haue discovered the Country of these Georgians to be situate in Asia betweene Colchos, Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and Armenia; heretofore Iberia and Albania; where he professeth that himselfe

To the Reader.

and his fellow-trauellers were courteously entertained by one of their Bishops. They are a warlike people, infested on both sides with the Turkish and Persian insolencies. They haue a Metropolitan of their owne, some say, the same that is resident in Mount Sinai. They are divided into eightene Bishopricks, and are not here to be distinguished from the Sorians, nor they from them, being almost of one religion, and called Melchites heretofore of their aduersaries, which signifies a king in the Syrian tongue; for that they would not embrace the heresies of Eutiches and Dioscorus, but obeyed the edict of the Emperour, and the Councell of Chalcedon. Their Patriarke is true Patriarke of Antioch; who abides in Damasco, for that Antioch lies now wel-nigh desolate, &c. lib. 3. pag. 172. More over their sect and originall is related by M^r Sam. Purchas in his Pilgrim 2 part. lib 8. §. 5. And S^r Walter Rawleigh in the first part of his History of the world, chap. 7. §. 10. speaking of the Mountaines of Armenia, on which the Arke of Noah was forsaken by the waters, out of Ptolomy and Pliny doth shew that they were not the same with the Gordixan mountaines, and that from
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To the Reader.

the Northermost of these did the Georgians take their names, who were first Gordians and then Georgians, who amidst all the strength of the greatest Infidels of Persia and Turkie, doe still remaine good Christians, vsing the language and Holies of the Grecians.

These, though farr distant from Rome, yet are not free from Romain temptations and delusions, contriued and put in practise by those pestilent Vermine and spreading Vnleeds the Iesuits; who are not content to act and teach their execrable doctrines of sedition, rebellion and the like, tending to the ruine of man-kinde, only in Europe; as hath lately beene well obserued of them, but haue entred vpon other parts of the world, as by this ensuing Letter will appeare, wherein thou maist read such a notorious Imposture of theirs, very truely related, as did iustly make them become odious and detested amongst the said Georgians (so are they in Europe amongst all good Christians) and for which they deserued no lesse punishment then was iustly inflicted vpon two of their fraternity, in China; the one, * Martinez, that was whipt to death; the other, Sebastian Fernandus, that was

In the preface
to the Quar-
rels of Pope
P. 5. with the
State of Venice
Eng. A^o. 1626.

† See Purch.
Pilgrim. 3.
part. p. 339. &
406.

To the Reader.

set on the Pillory, both for the like occasion and Im-
postures detected in that remote Kingdom, or up-
on two other of their profession in Germany which
were very lately apprehended and punished, the one
at Strasburg, and the other at Leipstick. Hee at
Strasburg (as certaine intelligence informe vs
from those parts) did confesse that himselfe was one
of the thirtie Iesuites that were imployed to bee
Agents for the Catholique cause in the present
warres in Germany: And how that the businesse
they were sent out for, was to poyson and make away
the chiefeſt Generalls, Captaines, Commanders, and
others of greatest note, that either by counsell or mi-
litary action did oppose the proceedings of the Em-
perour. Which when the Protestants of Strasburg
did vnderstand, they were not negligent to reward
him according to his iust desert.



THE LETTER.

To the most holy and Learned *Abbot*
SOPHRONIVS, GREGORIVS
*Monke and Priest wissheth happi-
nesse from God.*

Most holy and learned *Abbot*;



Elately sent Letters
vnto you from Ca-
chetium in Iberia,
(which is the coun-
try of the Georgians)
wherein wee decla-
red particularly what
daily occurrences
happened in our
journey, and how courteously wee were en-
tertained by *Teimurases*, Prince of the *Georgi-
ans*.

ans. Now while we tarried two daies at *Trapezunt* (a citty in the countrey of *Pontus*) we receiued letters from you : which when we perused, and had exactly considered the substance thereof, wee gaue thanks vnto God for strengthning and confirming you.

Among other matters, therein you require vsto eeresie you concerning the Martyrdome that the mother of the aforesaid Prince *Teimurases* suffered by the most wicked King of the *Persians* : which accordingly we will relate vnto you with all possible brevity, intending shortly to see you, when being present we shall more at large rehearse the same with other matters of moment.

The King of the *Persians*, hauing determined to make warre against that godly Prince *Teimurases* and the rest of the orthodox *Georgians* in the yeare 1614. with a great Armie he came to *Cachetium*, purposing to subdue their whole dominion, wherevpon their Cities and Townes hee partly spoiled by fire, and partly laid leuell with the ground : The common people of lesse account hee put to the

sword, together with aged persons, women well stricken in yeares, and tender infants ruthfull to behold: And, all being laid wast, the rest hee carried away captiue, amongst whom there was the Honourable mother of *Teimurases*, *Ketaban* by name, which he had taken at a certaine Towne called *Cremes*.

These things thus dispatcht, he betooke himselfe againe to *Persia*, carrying with him almost all the multitude of people that were captiues, as likewise great store of gold and siluer, with abundance of most precious householdstufte. Whither when they were come, report goes that the King gaue himselfe wholly to idlenesse, and for the space of eight daies followed his pastime and recreation, hauing first published a command by a common Cryer that none of the Captiues should be sould, saue the women only. Afterward being ascended into his Royall seat, appointing all to be brought before him, in one houre he beheaded aboue an hundred of such persons as had borne any publike office among the *Georgians*:

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and for the residue, some of them by inticements he drew to embrace his superstition; others that refused to yeeld to his perswasions, he made bondslaues vnto his subiects. This done, he calls for the Princes Mother, who comming to him, he solicites her after this manner.

Your olde age, ô Ketaban, in courtesy I honour, and your selfe I doe reverence and esteeme no lesse then my owne naturall mother: And as for the remainder of yeares which you haue yet to liue, my desire and hearty wish is, that you should spend the same in rest and quietnesse, as becomes such graue matrons and Mothers of Princes; Especially being as you are, for auncientnesse and wisdom eminent and venerable. Now one thing there is that I desire you to grant me, namely to forsake the Religion practised in your Country, and embrace Ours, as of all others being absolutely the most holy. For, you know, to worship a Mortall instead of a God is a point of impiety in the highest degree This if you please to assent vnto, then you shall not only haue the comfortable enioyment of your life, & liberty, but also be advanced to greatest honours

nours, and withall admitted to bee even my most intime friend and familiar acquaintance.

Whilest he with these & such like inticing words went about to seduce her to his superstition, shee was so farre from yeelding to his perswasions, that on the contrary being provok't by his allurements, with a long and resolute speech thus shee made him answer, saying.

Wherefore dost thou tempt me thou vngratious wight? Why dost thou labour to deprive me of all eternity for those few daies which I haue yet to liue? How long I pray thee, dost thou thinke, shall I (so aged) yet suruiue? Or suppose I were assured to spin out the thred of my life longer then other Mortalls, were it lawfull for me, o thou vaine fellow, to cheat & cozen my selfe of that blessed state, which shall be everlasting & without ending, for a fleeting and transitory life here? Or canst thou imagine that I am so stupid & senselesse as to be drawne by the hope or fruition of any of thy dignities to frustrate and betray my owne saluation, which I preferre before the whole world? Farre be it from mee, that I, who vtterly abhorre your iollity of delight

and fantasies. Should in any kinde dishonour or deny Him, whom you call a Mortall. For hee it was that through his owne pretious blood hauing freed mee from Thine and the Diuells temptations, by his resurrection hath raised mee to life, he being indeed the Sauour of all, even God Almighty.

Moreouer shee called him robber and wicked Tyrant, that so basely, so wretchedly and not as became a King, had set vpon them and spoiled most of their Citties.

This reply of hers when the King heard he was very highly displeased, and by his fearfull & terrible threats would haue daunted her courage and constancy. Howbeit thereby he added more spirits to her boldnesse, she steadfastly cleauing to that firme *Rocke*, namely to *Christ*. (For, you know, noble & generous minds are wont more eagerly to withstand the opposition of what ere striues against them.) Herevpon straightway he commaunded to cast her into a *seething Caldron*: vnto which she hastned as if it had beene to her bed-chamber. Therein being boyled vntill she yeilded vp her Spirit to the
Lord

Lord and had receiued the crowne of *Martyrdome*, shee was afterward throwne forth vpon the bare ground, destitute of Christian buriall.

Now there was one *Moachla* formerly a waiting maid to this blessed *Ketaban*, but at that time a companion in Captivity, whom one of the *Peeres* of the Kingdome kept then in bondage. She beholding the death of her *Lady*, whom shee exceeding greatly loved, out of a pious affection was moued to preserue the *Corps*. And to effect this desire she perswaded her then Lord and Master to procure the same *Corps*, as being a rich booty for which hee might receiue a great summe of mony from *Teimurases*, sonne to the said deceased *Martyr*. In hope hereof he sent this *Monachla* with two other of his ser-
uants, prively to fetch away the *dead body*, the same night after it was cast forth as a-
foresaid. Which when *Monachla* had trimly washed and put in a coffin, she safely laid vp, hiding it in the most inward and closest part of the house, vntill such time as some Embas-
sador

sador came from *Iberia*, that should make truce and redeeme both *Her* and the *Corps* of her *Lady*. For shee knew very well that the *Georgians* were not able to bicker with, or stand out long against the *King* of the *Persians*. Wherefore shee was confident, that albeit he had conquered and ruin'd most of their townes, yet they would shortly obtaine a league, and establish peace with him; which fell out so indeed.

But now to informe you of some occurrences happening when the *corps* should haue beene brought backe againe, it is expedient that I rehearse vnto you, some tricks of legerdemaine and notorious couzenage, well worth your attention.

At that time there liued in *Persia* certaine *Bretheren*, comne from old *Rome*, who were called *Iesuites*. These, as themselves pretended, came thither to the end they might convert that Nation from impious superstition, and teach the true worship of *Christ*. But such was the peoples frowardnesse, and obstinate wilfulnesse of that Country, that these

these *Iesuites* durst not so much as mutter or
gainsay them. Herevpon (it seemes) they re-
solved to depart to some other place where
they might dispatch what they were sent
for, with more successe and advantage, ha-
uing better opportunity to promote their
pretended designe. These men therefore
sought for the *dead body* of *Ketaban* which
they supposed was cast away & little set by,
yet could not finde it: And hauing no farther
list or leasure to make more search, thinking
that it was torne in peices by some wild
beasts, they betooke themselues to their
journey, and in the high way light vpon a
Carkasse, the head whereof they tooke, & ha-
uing perfumed it with sweet oyntments and
handsomely wound it vp, they carried along
with them into *Iberia*. Then approaching
neere to the Citie where *Teimurases* did re-
side, they sent some messengers to relate vn-
to him how that certaine *Christians*, such as
led an holy *Apostolique* life, were come to his
most renowned and Christian excellency,
hauing brought With them the pretious and
wonder-

wonder-working Head of his mother *Ketaban*, that late famous *Martyr* and champion of *Christ*: And albeit they vsed the best meanes possible to purchase the whole *body* entire, yet this was all they could procure either for loue or mony, hauing indeed passed through no small perill before they could obtaine it, but after much adoe being once got, though cut off and seperated from the body, yet by the wonderfull vertue thereof together with the power of their prayers & supplications they had beene freed and deliuered from very many dangers, and at length they were arriued at his country with this holy and blessed *Head* of the said *Martyr* in safety.

Teimurases hearing this, out of his great esteeme and reverence had towards holy *Martyrs*, but chiefly being moued with the naturall affection and great loue that hee bare towards his deare deceased Mother, Went a daies journey to meet these men, accompanied with a great multitude of his owne people, the *cleargy* and *Nobility* of
Iberia:

Iberia: And so after a solempne manner having in such flourishing pompe brought the *Relique* to *Cachetium* in *Iberia*, with great state and magnificence they placed it in the Temple of that noble *Martyr S. George Aleberdel*. And as for the *Iesuits* the *Prince* had them in high esteeme, placing them in faire & ample mansions, and appointing no small attendants to wait vpon them.

But now marke their fraud: There being honourable presents and preferments profer'd them from the *Prince*, they vterly refused to accept of any, alleaging this reason, because it did not become them that had vowed pouerty, and desired to lead an holy *Apostolique* life as they did, to admit of any such dignity and honour. Herevpon they were reputed very wise and discreet men, adorned with those rare vertues, *Humility* and *Prudence*, appearing to be such as mortified themselves by frequent abstinence, being constant in their daily devotions: And to bee briefe, for holinesse of life and integrity of conversation they seemed to be the very expresse and liue-

ly images of the *Apostles*.

This did greatly affect the Prince, inso-
much that for two or three daies, when hee
came to worship the *Relique*, at his returne he
vouchsafed to visite these *Iesuits*, and entring
the stately dwellings assigned them, hee had
familiar conference with them. So likewise
did his Courtiers and Noblemen, who out
of a certaine emulation offered rich gifts in
honour of the *Princes Mother*, and with sum-
ptuous presents greatly enriched the Tem-
ple. Which devout liberality when the *Iesuits*
observed, they thereby were put in hope that
the wealth & treasure of the Temple would
be daily augmented, iudging of the future in-
crease by the present great accessse of bounty:
Then what doe they, but goe to the Prince,
and tell him that they are but *Monasticall* men
addicted to a solitary, frugall, and rigid course
of life: and therefore it was not meet or con-
venient for them to inhabit sumptuous build-
ings; some little chamber or meane cottage
would suffice them wel-enough: wherefore
they did humbly beseech his *Excellency* for
licence

licence to remoue from their present habitation, and settle themselves neare to the place where the *Relique* of the *Martyr* was kept; and that the charge and custody thereof might be committed to *Them*, who had taken great care and paines to get it brought thither.

This their request seemed but iust and equitable, very consonant to their profession and course of life. The *Prince* then out of his good opinion of their holy purpose, by and by gaue order they should haue licence and liberty to change their mansion, and bee admitted into a house neare the Temple, wherein some Monks of that countrey did reside.

Thus being planted and placed according to their owne desire, from thenceforth they ceased not openly to report how that the said *Relique* did worke *Miracles*: which notwithstanding were eident and visibly made knowne only to their friends and men of their owne household. This being divulged and bruted abroad, people of all sorts with great devotion and zeale flocked thither, bringing abundancie of gifts and pre-

sents: All which the *Iesuites* readily accepting and kindly taking into their possession, some small portion thereof they bestowed vpon the said *Monkes* of that place; boldly affirming and making them belecue, that, in regard of the *Relique* which they had brought, and was then committed to their trust to be conserved in safety, the *Prince* had granted them licence to appropriate vnto themselves all benefits and commodities accrewing thereby: Howbeit, notwithstanding that, out of the courtesy & loue they bare to them being ioynt-tenants or co-inhabitants with them, they were content (though the *Prince* knew nothing of it) to allot them part of their commings in: yet vpon this condition, that they should never reueale to any man what became of the presents and offerings that were brought, whereof they were made partakers. (*Note how cunningly and craftily these men dealt.*)

When therefore the rumor of these *miracles*, which they had confidently reported, was noised abroad throughout all *Iberia*, a great

great many sicke folkes and diseased persons resorted to them in hope of cure, whom the *Iesuits*, after they had made them yeeld due obeisance and reverence to the *Relique*, sent away blest and fortified (forsooth) with the benison and signe of the crosse. And if any among them were diseased with some mortall and incurable infirmity, such they pronounced to be vncleane and borne in sin, and therefore hauing first at their departure made confession of their trespasses, they admonished them cherefully to vndertake to satisfy the *Canon* in point of pennance, and after they were purified & thereby fully cleansed, then might they returne againe to the *Relique*: But these, alas, while they waited for the day appointed, and expected recouery, were, (as their *confessors* knew would come to passe) found departed out of this mortall life. Howbeit such as were afflicted with lesse diseases, to them they applyed wholsome and convenient medicines: for belike they had some skill in the faculty of administering *Physicke*. These, being healed, they admitted,

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mitted to confession, granting them all things requisite, when they were once freed from the bond of their iniquities, auerring that the *authority* so to doe did appertaine onely to them: Because, as they taught, the power of bestowing *Saluation* is only proper to them, vnto whom the *Apostolique Ministry* is committed vpon trust by him, that is the Prince and head of the *Church*. Neither did that benigne and bountifull *Iesu*, for his exceeding great mercies towards vs, leaue vs altogether succourlesse and destitute of aide, but hee governes and directs vs (said they) by his Proxy and vicerent namely the *Pope of Rome*, with a many other such like lessons did they *Catechize* and seduce the vulgar at the time of their shrifting and confession.

And although some perceiued this their iugling deceit and *Imposture*, yet none durst so much as whisper or giue any intimation thereof for feare of the *Prince*, who was knowne to loue and respect them; especially because he obserued the most of his *Nobles* to be ioyned with them by the strongest tye
of

of friendship. For partly by gifts, (for so those Knaues abused the *Presents* of the Temple to win the peoples affection by Bribery) and partly by Hypocrisy and dissembled Sanctity, they gained themselves friends, and perswaded some of the better sort to avouch vnto *Teimurases* that they had beene eye-witnesses of the most of the said *miracles* which were wrought by that *Relique*: and that they or any of them should receiue a iust recompence of rewarde from the *Righteous Iudge*, if they could by any meane inflame and excite the mindes of *Prince* and people vnto saluation and Godlinesse; yea, though they did effect the same by lying, dissembling, & counterfeiting perswasions: for these they called their *holy frauds*. Now this was subtilly and purposely by them thus done, to the end they might bee able to produce prooffe by witnesses to the *Prince* and people of these *miracles*, Which they had reported to haue beene wrought by the *Martyr*, and that they might not want protectors and adhaerents to side with & support them in case the times should change

change, as verily it fell out shortly after.

For when the fame of the said strange wonders and *Miracles* was dispersed through all quarters in *Iberia*, it was made knowne also among the *Persians*, and so came to the eares of *Moachla* formerly a waiting gentlewoman to the said *Martyr*, who straight-way address'd letters to *Teimurases*, wherein shee assured him that the *Corps* of her *Lady* was in her custody. The Letters being brought to *Teimurases* hee concealed the contents and would not disclose the news, but sent his Embassadors to make truce with the *Persians*, charging them to require his mothers *Corps*. The Embassadors therevpon concluded a peace, dispatcht their Masters commaund, redeemed very many *Georgians*, and *Moachla* among the rest, and brought backe againe into *Iberia*, the dead body of thir *Princes* mother, which (the chest or coffin wherein it was conserued being opened) they knew very well by certaine markes to be the very body of *Ketaban*. Wherefore the *Prince*, being incensed with just anger and indignation, out
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of hand commanded that the Iesuites should be imprisoned. But they (*false Knaues*) preuented the danger by flying to those *Noble mens* houses, whom they had taught to ly and equiuocate, in making them professe that they were eye-witnesse of the wonders, or rather *delusions*, lately wrought by the *Head-relique*: and being driuen to that strait, they prevailed so farre with the *Nobles*, as to bee permitted to continue secret in their houses till their *Princes* wrath was appeased, putting them in hope that they would vndoubtedly devise some way how themselves might bee excused to the *Prince*: who in the meane while caused his *mothers Corps* to bee safely laid vp in the said Temple of *S. George Aleberdel*, where also was kept the supposed *Relique*.

Three daies after, the *Seduced Nobles*, according as they receiued direction from their prompters, the *Iesuits*, went to the *Prince*, & told him that albeit the said *prime-capitall Relique* was not the very *very-head* of his *Mother*, yet because it had done *miracles*, and was

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a hallowed thing, therefore did it merit reverence. Neither had the fraternity of the *Jesuites* committed any forgeries, or done any feats to cozen or gull him, but only for this end that they might magnify his *Mother*, and to make her most holy *Martyrdome* the more famous and renowned.

The *Prince* well perceiving these colourable pretences, thereby knew that his *Peeres* and *Nobles* themselves were not inexcusable from dissimulation and *imposture*: yet because he stood in need of their aide & attendance, and also feared to be assaulted by one *Maraes*, whom he had expelled and taken possession of his principality; Therefore he was content to heare them talke, seeming to give credit and assent vnto their sayings: And for their sakes forbore to prosecute and stay the *Jesuites*, whom notwithstanding the *Nobles* had determined to reveale and betray rather then come in jeopardy themselves by keeping them lurking in their houses: And to prevent all future danger, if afterward strict enquiry were made for them, that the
Prince

Prince might not take them in a lie, they wisely resolued vpon this course, namely to rid themselues quite of these impostors by causing them to depart out of their houses and country, and so they were conueied into the next neighbouring territories. But now the great reproach, shame and disgrace to their profession which these deceiuers left behind them, throughout all *Iberia*, especially by reason of *Moachla*, which in my opinion was more ignominious then if they had suffered death, I am scarce able to relate. *Here then was the end of this Comedy.*

Within a few daies after, there were two wagoners of *Iberia*, who returning from *Persia* into their owne coutry told how they had brought some *Iesuites* thither, and how that in the way, finding certaine dead carcases, (most likely of some theeues and robbers) the *Brethren*, whom they conveyed, lighted from their horses, and hauing cut off the head of a beardlesse youth, throwne among the rest, they carried it to their lodging, where they boyled and embalmed it. The relation of

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these *Wagoners* being made knowne to *Teimurases*, he sends for them, who being come to him he strictly and diligently examines, about this which they reported, and finding all likelihood of truth in their said relation, he sends them to looke vpon the *bead-relique*, which when they had beheld they professed that it was the very same *bead* that was cut off in their journey; and then at length by the *Princes* peremptory command, who very much repented that the *knauish Iesuits* had not beene beheaded, the *stinking Relique* was cast out with shame enough: And the *Prince* being mightily incensed, he gaue prohibition to his subiects, that none of them should worship the *dead body* of his Mother, or obserue to keepe any *Festivall daies*, saue the feast of *S. George Aleberdel*, and the feast of *All. Saints*: adding withall, that if *Ketaban* was a *Saint*, then doubtlesse she was comprised in the number of *All. Saints*. And thus was the whole matter ended.

Now for my part, I must professe my selfe
fore

fore perplexed in conscience, and much grieved that I committed this great folly, namely for that I did worship and yeeld honour to a *Relique* of an *Infidell* and *Barbarian*, perchance of some theefe and common robber, because indeed I thought thereby to become gracious with the Prince *Teimurases*. But God grant the sinne may light vpon their *heads* that were the causes and authors of it.

These things I thought meet to impart vnto you at this time by letters. Hereafter when we shall (by Gods helpe) come thither, I trust wee shall see you, and enioy mutuall conference together: And then you shall more fully vnderstand both these and other matters, aswell what was done there, as likewise what you required of me in your last letter.

TRAPEZUNT May 16.

Ann. 1626.

Your most louing and devoted

GREGORY.